

RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)
DRAFT MINUTES
November 20, 2002

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Frances Werner, John Neal, Rick Holloway, Lee Aitken, Sandee McCullen, Glen Collins, Steve Saway, Lamar Smith, Norm Wallen, Lorraine Eiler

ABSENT: Chris Newell, Bill Branan, Sanford Cohen, Hector Ruedas, and Mary Dahl

BLM STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Carl Rountree, Don Ellsworth, Deborah Stevens, Roger Taylor, Brenda Smith, Shela McFarlin, Mike Taylor, Marlynn Spears, Michael Taylor, Joanie Losacco

PRESENTERS & GUESTS: Anita Waite, Mohave Livestock Association Representative; and Dan Shein, public

Next RAC meeting: January 27, 2003 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2532 W. Peoria Avenue, Phoenix, AZ.

AGENDA ITEM: RAC National Conference Broadcast – RAC Members participated in “Push to Talk” Broadcast with BLM Director Kathleen Clarke & 23 RAC Chairs.

DISCUSSION: The Arizona RAC was part of the studio audience for the 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. broadcast.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Call to Order (Frances Werner, RAC Chairperson)

DISCUSSION: The Chair called the meeting to order at the National Training Center at 1:00 p.m. on the afternoon of November 20, 2002. Frances thanked everyone for attending. Greetings and introductions were then made around the room.

AGENDA ITEM: Overview of RAC National Conference Proceedings (Frances Werner, RAC Chair)

DISCUSSION: Frances provided an overview of the recommendations from the 23 RAC Chairs during the RAC National Conference. These recommendations included:

- 1) Development of a national RAC website – to showcase RAC meetings and activities throughout the West and to provide a coordination tool among RACs to share ideas and plan for possible joint RAC meetings.
- 2) Scheduling an annual meeting of RAC chairs – to meet with Director Clarke, Washington Office, State and field officials to continue dialogue on mutual and future land management issues.
- 3) Creation of RAC “Recharge” Team – to address all the recommendations that came from RAC chairs, working groups, and member input from the Phoenix session.
- 4) Identification of a National RAC Coordinator position – to be charged full-time with assessing needs for RAC operations, interactions, orientation and training.

(A summary of recommendations is attached in a separate document.)

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Discussion of RAC National Conference Recommendations (All RAC Members)

DISCUSSION: RAC members were enthusiastic about the RAC National Conference, and the commitment by the BLM Director to continue improving and working with RACs across the West. They were involved in the broadcast and had an opportunity to ask questions of the Director and her staff.

ACTION: Arizona RAC to provide any additional recommendations or questions on the RAC National Conference to Frances for Washington input.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment Period

DISCUSSION: Anita Waite, representing the Mohave Livestock Association, presented materials pertaining to several permit renewal reviews in the Kingman area. On behalf of the Association, Anita enumerated a number of concerns about the methodologies used, and the amount of time the reviews were taking. BLM Arizona Associate State Director Carl Rountree accepted the materials and indicated that a report would be brought back to the RAC at the next meeting. During this discussion, RAC member Norm Wallen asked for staff clarification on “What is the role of the RAC with regard to specific complaints brought forth by Mohave Livestock Association. Have staff clarify the charter requirements.”

AGENDA ITEM: Wild Horse and Burro Group (Lee Aitken and Rick Holloway)

DISCUSSION: Reported on their subcommittee discussions regarding a proposed “business plan” for raising awareness about the Wild Horse and Burro Program. Entities that could be included: Congressional staffers, elected officials, stakeholders, the general public, and schools. Kelly Grissom, BLM Wild Horse and Burro coordinator, reported about 300 groups work and champion interests of wild horses and burros. In general, these groups are not interested in the associated environmental issues.

Some of the ideas for building awareness, include power point presentation for RAC members to use at service clubs, etc., speakers bureau, radio/TV programs. Key messages could include: animals are no longer endangered; overpopulation of animals causes environmental damage; and the lack of appropriate federal funding to support the cost of the program. Development of a plan will continue, as will exploring possibility of obtaining an outside grant to develop media materials.

It was also mentioned, it would be a good idea to split out burro program funding from the funding for horses (since burros are the focus in Arizona). One of the reasons, the funding for this program has been reduced, is because of the fires in Nevada in 2001, and the continuing drought in 2002. Another consideration of the “business plan” is that it may not be achieved within the planning guidelines because of the lack of funds, and populations continue to increase. Concerns were also expressed about the proposal from private entity to move 7-10,000 wild horses south of the Mexican border into an area including the headwaters of the San Pedro, using funding from BLM. RAC subcommittee will continue to work on PRs (?) as a “pilot project”.

ACTION: Please read business plan and give Lee Aitken feedback for the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: Standards and Guidelines Working Group Report (Lamar Smith)

DISCUSSION: Reported plans are being developed to conduct training for BLM employees, and members of the Rangeland Resource Teams (RRTs) throughout the state to provide “hands on” training on the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, and how they are implemented. BLM staffers, Bill Coulloudon and Ron Hooper, are working with Lamar to conduct the training. The training will provide an overview of What are Standards and Guidelines?, How were they developed? How are they being implemented?, and What are the roles and responsibilities for the BLM, RAC & RRT?. In addition, the trainees will go out into the field to learn how to gather and monitor data to assess the health of the land, and learn how to analyze the data for effective decision-making.

Lamar expressed the importance of continuing education, using on-going, in-service short courses to keep BLM staffers up to date with developments in new management techniques. Good science and consistency in the implementation of the S&Gs should be emphasized throughout the state. Tentative Training Timetable: January 28, 2003 – Phoenix, Yuma, Havasu – training in Phoenix area; March 26, 2003 – Safford and Tucson – training in Benson area – a proper functioning condition workshop under the sponsorship of the local NRCDC may be added; and May in St. George, Utah (3 days). Everyone on the RAC should attend at least one training session. RRTs, and BLM staff should attend one in their area as well.

Lamar suggested this training be planned a year in advance.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Land Use Working Group Report (Frances Werner)

DISCUSSION: No report will be offered on the Land Use Working Group progress. The chair of the group, Mary Dahl, is attending the AZ and NM Planning Conference in Tucson at this time. Mary e-mailed an updated strategy document to all the RAC. Please provide your comments for the next meeting discussion.

Carl Rountree added that work is continuing on the six planning efforts. There are still some key vacant position on the different planning teams, some contracts left to be awarded, and approximately a 2 million funding shortfall in FY 2003. He thanked the RAC for the strategy they have outlined to assist the BLM with these planning efforts.

ACTION: Provide comments to revised Land Use Planning Strategy to Mary Dalh for the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Relations Working Group Report (Steve Saway)

DISCUSSION: Steve thanked Ms. Stevens for producing the latest RAC Notes. The next issue will report on the working groups and upcoming meetings.

ACTION: Provide information to Deborah Stevens for RAC Notes compilation.

AGENDA ITEM: Recreation and Tourism Working Group Report (Sandee McCullen)

DISCUSSION: Reported the Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Conference was well organized and an excellent forum to address OHV issues with a wide variety of local, state, and federal land managers and representatives from the OHV community. During one of the workshops, a representative from the BLM

Safford Field Office presented an excellent case study on the Hot Well Dunes project. The case study was well received. Also, a presentation by the Forest Service on the Paiute ATV Trail System received a lot of interest and demonstrates a very successful partnership between a land management agency and local communities. A field trip followed the workshops, viewing issues like soil erosion, cultural resources, tortoise habitat, riparian and rock crawling. A presentation was made at each tour stop with a question and answer session.

As a result of many OHV planners and managers questioning “What is Rock Crawling? What is it about?”, the Arizona Rock Crawlers Club presented an exhibition rock crawl in a member’s backyard. This was done to show the diversity of rock crawling today ---- from local trails, to small- contained areas, or managed “play parks”. There were 65+ OHV managers in attendance for this presentation. Several buckled up into the passenger seat and took the daring ride.

During the Arizona Progress Recognition workshop, Sandee McCullen received the individual OHV Recognition Award for her outstanding efforts to make Arizona a more responsible and better place to ride.

Thanks were given to BLM for helping to sent three RAC members to participate in the OHV Conference.

ACTION ITEM: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Discussion on Future Meetings/Locations

DISCUSSION: Next RAC meetings:

January 27, 2003 – The business meeting to be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2532 W. Peoria Avenue from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

January 28, 2003 - The S&G training will be held at the Crowne Plaza for the first 2 hours with a field trip to the Agua Fria National Monument – Badger Springs area. The training will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

March 25, 2003 - The business meeting to be held at the Benson Community College (subject to available space), from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Agenda items to be established at January 27th RAC Meeting

March 26, 2003 - The S&G training will be held at the Benson Community College for the first 2 hours with a field trip in the Benson area. The training will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

May 7-9, 2003 - The RAC Meeting and S&G training will be conducted in St. George, Utah. Details will be provided at January 27, or March 26, RAC meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda items to include Update on Southwest Strategy, Land Use Planning, BLM Kingman Report on Mohave Livestock Association Issues, with clarification on RAC’s role and responsibilities on user complaints, and regular standing agenda reports.

- Update on the Southwest Strategy
- Update on Land Use Planning

- BLM Kingman Report on Mohave Livestock Association Issues, with clarification on RAC's role and responsibilities on user complaints
- Regular Standing Agenda Reports

MEETING ADJOURNED